News Releases
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Newfoundland Labrador

Tourism, Culture and Recreation
Government Services
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Information Sessions to Focus on Highway Signage

The Provincial Government today announced that, beginning next week, a series of information sessions will be held for key stakeholders throughout the province on a proposed new approach to highway signage in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"Following a review of the province's current highway signage policy and regulations, we found our system is no longer serving its two primary purposes – to provide clear directional and essential service information to the travelling public, and to effectively promote Newfoundland and Labrador's tourist attractions and services in a manner which serves both visitors and the tourism industry," said the Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Tourism Culture and Recreation. "It is clear a new approach is necessary."

The review has resulted in a recommendation that the Provincial Government adopt the Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) model, which is based on worldwide standards for highway signage and has been implemented throughout Canada and the world as a more effective way to balance the needs of motorists and the tourism industry. (Backgrounder follows).

"We know the status quo is not an option," the minister said. "We continue to hear from the travelling public – both residents and visitors – that our directional signage is not always clear and that people have difficulty finding the places and attractions they want to see.

"In addition, we're fortunate that our tourism industry has grown to the point where there are many more attractions and tourism-related businesses which are eligible to place signage on our highways," Minister Jackman said. "This has, however, proven to be a mixed blessing, as the number of highway signs has increased to the point whereby signage is not effectively serving the travelling public and, frankly, is detracting from the natural beauty of the landscape."

Minister Jackman said the purpose of the information sessions is to present to key stakeholders – tourism operators, municipal leaders, regional economic organizations and the business community – the findings of the research, provide information on the TODS approach, and enable those most affected by any potential change to have input on how best to move forward.

Meanwhile, the Department of Government Services will continue to approve applications for new tourism-related signage which meet the current criteria, until such time as a new signage plan is finalized.

"Although we will be approving applications based on the current process, we will ensure that applicants are fully aware that the Provincial Government is undertaking consultations on the TODS model," said the Honourable Kevin O'Brien, Minister of Government Services. "Applicants will receive written information explaining that there is an ongoing review of the matter, and that it is possible that private billboards may be removed from the highways in the future."

Bruce Sparkes, President of Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (HNL), said the tourism industry association recognizes that signage regulations based on the TODS model is the research-based, customer-focused approach employed by most other national and international jurisdictions.

"We agree with the concept, in principle, and look forward to the information sessions and to the

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opportunity for our membership to provide input into the final highway signage plan and its implementation," Mr. Sparkes said.

The information sessions are scheduled as follows: Port aux Basques (April 22); Corner Brook (April 23); Grand Falls-Windsor (April 24); Marystown (April 25); Gander (April 28); Clarenville (April 29); Labrador City (May 5); Happy Valley-Goose Bay (May 6); L'Anse au Clair (May 7); St. Anthony (May 8); Carbonear (May 12); Placentia (May 13); and, St. John's (May 14). For further information, please visit: www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/signage.

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BACKGROUNDER

Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS)

Following a review of provincial highway signage policy and regulations, it has been recommended that the Provincial Government implement highway signage regulations which are based on the Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) model, the standard for directional signage and tourist information services worldwide.

TODS balances directional needs of the travelling public, the promotional needs of the tourism industry, and the need to preserve the province's natural scenery.

The TODS system is based on:

- strategic positioning (close to exits/intersections);
- uniformity (same order of attractions and services at each exit)
- content (name of establishment, symbol, direction and distance information)
- colour (white lettering on blue background).

The TODS model will result in signage that is consistent, easy to locate, and uses universal symbols and standards for optimal effectiveness.

New signage will provide clear, concise directional information and will reduce highway safety concerns, frustration, and negative experiences.

Rural regions and tourist establishments will be promoted in a strategic manner to encourage more visitor traffic and increased economic benefit to regions.

The number of signs will be reduced by an estimated 50 per cent, allowing travellers to enjoy the scenic environment the province promotes.

The vast majority of Canadian jurisdictions have implemented signage policies based on the TODS model.

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